

## **Converging or diverging? Language history in what may be the world's most diverse linguistic area**

John Mansfield (UZH)

In the Daly region of northern Australia, current consensus is that five distinct language families are found solely within a small regional population of around 10,000 speakers. If true, this could be the most phylogenetically diverse region of the world on some measures. The separate-families view is based on very low cognate rates between these languages, as well as general lack of historical work. These languages are also thought to constitute a linguistic area, with several common grammatical patterns.

In this presentation I will focus on Southern Daly and Western Daly families, and contrast two possible scenarios: independent phylogenies with massive grammatical convergence, or a shared phylogeny with massive lexical divergence.